The Repeating History; Or, The Checkered Career of a Threat to Kill Nixon HW 8/21/73

It sure seemed odd early yesterday morning to hear that there was a reported threat to kill Our Glorious Leader in New Orleans and on the day the criminal trial of Jim Garrison was scheduled to open. The more of what little was reported by radio, the more and more strange the story seemed.

Naturally, under this great strain the inner strength, that noble courage of the GL shone through. He would listen to the Secret Service, disciplined man that he is. But he also would not cop out. No, not he! He would, too, have a motorcade. Of Course, for security it would have to be shortened and the route changed.

Shortened means less than five blocks. Route changed means a motorcade where there are no people or the change is a fake, and then what is the threat? Or, is it a motorcade without people. Not just a quicj trip?

The first thing I wondered about is why use the car at all if there is a danger? Why not use a helicopter? His personal one wasn't there, but there are scads of them in and around the city. The story to the press was no pad. Who needs a pad? After VN? There is, right at the convention cite, ample open and free or freeable space.

Tempered as suspicion had to be when this was in New Orleans, where the pecans are the least common nuts and where politics, except for the non-existent left can be hot, suspicion there still had to be. None of it stacked up.

If, as the reports had it, there was a conspiracy, there were many unaddressed problems not addressed by the reported precautions. Some are impossible. There is, for example, but one exit from the airport and then for a long enough distance, but a single road into town, with an abundance of jiding places along it if someone is determined to end this brilliant career so well on the way toward establishin permanent peace forevermore. Evermore.

After turning toward New Orleans and travelling a short distance, the first of several alternate routes, all long and none safer, become possible with turns to the left, off Airline Highway. Then Airline can be parallelled. Or, it can be taken to the multiple entrence to Interstate Highway I 10, which is tricky as hell without locals to lead the way. If Airline is left earlier, doubling back to I 10 is simple, closer to the lake or via Metairie Road. Once I 10 is taken, it is possible to double-cross those intent upon offing in the suburbs by not staying on it, by going along the river to Clainorne, which is a large, divided thoroughfare that could be fast with sirens and flashing red lights. It intersects with Canal, where the motorcade was supposed to be. Or, I 10 would be fast to the St. Charles exit, which would lead right to the spot on Canal where a 5-block motorcade could begin. Or 2 block, or 3, or 4.

But none of this would eliminate the real problem, how to keep him from being in the crosshairs downtown anywhere near the convention hall. (He appears to have been pretty uncool by the time he got there because CBS TV evening news tobight had footage, not the still peiture of the papers, on him pulling Ziegler. It was not just an accident, as printed press reported. He actually turned around, walked back and gave Zieg a real push, then return to his going to the hall. Real uncool!)

In reading William Chapman's story in this morning's Post, I got the notion that he wasn't totally persuaded only the incredibly bravery of the world's smartest and bravest hero was the story. So, I spoke to him, especially about the quote to the effect that this Edwin Gaudet had been heard to say, approximately, "Somebody ought to kill Nixon and if nobody else has the guts, I guess I'll do it." It seemed like a familiar phrase, in not in Bartlett. First I thought Bremer, and then I realized that with slight desecration, replacing the fine name with "son-of-a-bitch" it was Jack Ruby, as quoted.

Then the stories on the radio yesterday made indefinite reference to a drug story. Boingggggg! Waterbury's on the side of Canal oppositethe French Quarter and 4-5 blocks

from the river would do nicely. Beautifully, in fact. That also becomes a parallel with the infamous Lee Harvey Oswald (as does the Gaudet police mug shot, the only picture used that I know of and him with all that New Orleans family). For some reason I never figured out, the FBI was reluctant to have anything to do with that particular drug store of the thousands in New Orleans. They are not exactly scare in that vicinity, either. The Warren Commission was more determined that the FBI. They were not reluctant-they abolished it. But the FBI did have and did bury and the Warren Commission did ignore repeated reports of Oswald in that drug store and more often near it. In fact, it is very close to where he was busted 8/8/63. Garrison's files must be stuffed with reports of an Oswald sighting there. Much of his is bullshit, but that is the point: it has Oswald saying something close to what is attributed to Gaudet, who turns out to have been in a New Mexico commune near Taos for weeks. There, no doubt, Sam McCloud had it under control anyway.

So, I told Chapman (presumeably not the Chapman of Chapman's Friend fame) if this was the drug store, of all those in N.O., maybe something was not kosher. If he is on the story and learned which drug store he didn't tell me. But on NBC-TV evening news, there it was, without identification in the sound track.

There hasn't been a Fair Play for Cuba Committee for years, but there are always communes now and sure enough, Gaudet is a commune-ist.

This may not be the best of possible worlds but it sure is getting to be the smallest.

However, one thing remains constant, the fearlessness of our valorous leader. And in public, too - loud enough to be heard and reported (CBS radio news 2 p.m. EST). "They" aren't going to do this to him again. Next time he's going to have his motorcade, press the flesh, and be on TV (as though he wasn't with that pioneering speech on how patriotic it was to bomb and keep it secret from the american people only so Old Souvanna wouldn't be embarrassed.

After all the play on Gaudet(a not uncommon name in New Orleans but not exactly Jones or Smith, either) it turns out there were four other guys. So far. Not indentified. No hints. Maybe Cubans, as in Watergate?

There were other important clues. A cop's uniform was stolen. And so was the personal official car of the chief of police. It was linked with these plots, probably because it was found on the opposite side of town from the scene of the offing-to-be.

Anyway, it is a nice touch to conform to the local culture. This sure did that! Reminds me of the Wednesday night after MLKing was killed. The police had a hot and hushhushsecret tip that there was to be one great big race riot that night. All the assistant DAs, no exception, where to ride shotgun with cops. They are all armed there anyway, these DAs. Well, that was so well-kept a secret that every decent restaurant in the outlying sections closed up. I didn't try the downtown. Sciambra wanted to take me to a special seafood restaurant along the lakefront. Not one was open! We got crawfish in a neighborhood bar (good crawfish, too). Afterward he drove me back to the "Bleau, where I was staying, and I got some work done. It was, as it turned out, about the most peaceful night in recent New Orleans history.

Agnew gave it the appropriate touch with his 3 p.m. news conference: the government of which he is vice president is out to get him and he wants them to stop.

All of this should teach the Secret Service a lesson. Next time they should give his secrets right back to McGovern. And let Nixon have his ol' evening TV in New Orleans. The worst he could do would be to pre-empt reruns of Perry Mason, which used to be the top-rated program there.

But I wonder why nobody used the footage NBC aired tonight last evening or night or this morning? Can't a President even push a Ziegler anymore when he wants to be on [illegible] that is thought that law was drowned.

TV but doesn't wanna be pre-empted with News, Same deal, Theatre Thought that law was drowned.